



TENNESSEE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
CORNERSTONE SQUARE BUILDING
530 CHURCH STREET, SUITE 305
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37243-0745
(615) 741-5825 FAX (615) 253-1886

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:
Esperanza "Hope" Soriano
615-253-1608
esperanza.soriano@state.tn.us



New Executive Director Appointed to the Tennessee Human Rights Commission

(Nashville, TN, July 2007) The Tennessee Human Rights Commission named Beverly Watts as the Agency's new executive director.

Watts most recently served as Special Advisor to the Chair of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, where she provided leadership and guidance in developing the agency's strategic plan and performance measures. She previously served as the first executive director of the National Fair Housing Training Academy (NAFHTA) in Washington, D.C., a federally funded HUD program designed to improve performance standards and ensure consistency in fair housing investigations nationwide.

In her new role with the Tennessee Human Rights Commission, Watts will be responsible for day-to-day operations, improving overall case processing time, improving customer service, and implementing the Agency's strategic goals. Watts served as Executive Director of the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights, a comparable civil rights enforcement agency with a \$2.5M budget, from 1992-2004.

"I'm confident that Ms. Watts' background in Human and Civil Rights will continue to carry the organization forward in affirming the State policy of anti-discrimination in housing, employment and public accommodation," said Spencer Wiggins, Chairman of the Board.

Previous positions included Director of Management Advisory Services for Ralph D. Moore and Associates; Regional Director of the Civil Rights Division with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Executive Director of the Illinois Minority and Female Business Program.

Watts, a native Nashvillian, is the recipient of numerous awards, including the 2005 Martin Luther King Freedom Award from Metro Louisville Government, the 2004 IAOHRA president's Award from the International Association of Official Human Rights Agencies, the 2003 Governor Martha Layne Collins Women Leading Kentucky Leadership Award, and the 2003 Equal Employment Opportunity Commission / Fair Employment Practice Agency Award for Innovative Outreach. She's been cited in *Who's Who of Female Executives*, *Who's Who among Black Americans*, and *Who's Who in America*.

Watts is a Tennessee State University graduate and earned a master's degree in sociology from Southern Illinois University. Watts also attended Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government Senior Executives Program and Duke University's Strategic Leadership for State Executives Program. She was also an official United Nations Non Governmental Organizations observer in Durban, South Africa, at the UN World Conference on Racism.

The Tennessee Human Rights Commission is governed by a 15 member Board of Commissioners. The Commission's role, by means of enforcement and education, is to safeguard the citizens of Tennessee from discrimination in the areas of employment, housing, and public accommodation in regard to race, creed, color, religion, sex, disability, age (over 40), national origin, and familial status. For more information on the Tennessee Human Rights Commission visit www.tn.gov/humanrights.

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